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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/18/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: PANDEMONIUM IN THE HOUSE OF REPS

REF: A. ABUJA 2096
[1](#)B. ABUJA 1932

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons
1.4. (b& d).

[1](#)1. (U) Plans to reconvene the Nigerian House of Representatives October 16 after a two week recess were marred by two days of pandemonium, as opponents of House Speaker Patricia Etteh attempted to block her attempts to preside over a debate into an investigation of herself. The Idoko Panel looked into, and generally supported, allegations that Etteh had approved the unbudgeted expenditure of 628 million naira (approx. US\$5 million) to renovate her official residence (see ref A). As before, both of the two opposing factions were primarily drawn from the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), with those close to former President Obasanjo supporting Etteh (PDP, Oshun State) and those opposed to his continuing influence calling for the Speaker's removal.

[1](#)2. (C) On day one, members barred Etteh from leaving the chambers for over two hours after she ignored pleas to remove herself from presiding over the Idoko Panel debate. House members opposed to her chanted "All we are saying, Speaker step down" ; "All we are saying, Etteh must go" ; and "thief, thief." No business was heard on October 17 either as the rowdiness continued for a second day. Congressman Clever Ikisikpu (PDP, Bayelsa state) (protect) told PolOffs that if Etteh refuses to step down when the House reconvenes, many members may walk out in protest. Despite the controversy, Etteh refused to voluntarily step down for the discussion of the investigation, or to allow a motion for a vote on her removal.

[1](#)2. (C) COMMENT: Despite Etteh's supporters claiming they have 260 out of 360 House members on their side, the magnitude of protest over the past two days suggests otherwise and may indicate that she at present lacks the level of support needed to keep her seat were the matter to come to a vote. Etteh's insistence on controlling the debate suggests that she may be of the same view. END COMMENT.

[1](#)3. (SBU) NOTE: During the October 17 fracas, Congressman Aminu Safana (PDP, Katsina State), one of Etteh's supporters, slumped over and was rushed to National Hospital where he later died (Safana is the third member of the House to die in as many months.) Because of his death, it is normal practice for the House to take a one or two day recess for mourning,

so it may not reconvene until October 22. END NOTE.
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